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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

Should the colors suggested be employed, let the red and blue, and the olive and yellow come opposite. Make up a cushion of suitable size of stout bedticking and stuff with hair. Lay over the ticking cushion the knitted cover, overlapping the cushion, and sew on firmly. With a long darning needle and waxed stout flax thread draw the cushion down through the center, and trim with a pompon made of the odds and ends of the different wools in use, and finish the cushion by lining the bottom with a circular piece of sheepskin or morocco. The knitted cover for the *brioche* is a revival of a fashion of many years ago, but it is none the less pleasing for being a revived fancy. Colors of carpets and hangings may be carried out in the *brioche* with charming effect, and very beautiful covers can be produced in crochet work in wools.

MARY F. MARTIN. "Can handbooks of patterns for darning net be found? and will you recommend the thread which is regarded best for the work in question?" There are handbooks of patterns for darning net, but the richest effects that have come under our notice in this rich lace work have been those that have developed under the hands of the worker—the mesh of the net suggesting many variations in patterns. We have seen elegant sets of bed-spread and pillow shams in patterns begun in the center and carried out to the border. Another rich design in a bed set shows a large star in the center, and a small star in each corner and border of lace design—the design of the coverlet carried out reduced in size in the pillow shams. A very handsome bed set is worked in wide insertion stripes with lace border, and a fourth set is in checkered design, the squares filled in with stars, bordered with a scalloped lace. Handbooks of patterns of this description have not been produced; these patterns were evolved in the minds of the workers. Barbour's flax flourishing thread is that used in darned net work.

JEANNIE S. NORFLEET. In our issue of last month we gave information in regard to rugs and mats suitable to lay beside beds and in front of sofas. Your application is replied to in that information, and we would refer you to our files. But since then we have been refreshed with the sight of a novelty in a bedside mat, a description of which you will do well to observe. The center is of felt in a medium shade of olive color, with the monogram of the lady who designed the mat in script initials six inches square worked in black crewel. A square of black cloth in each corner has applied on it a magnified butterfly embroidered in brilliant colors, while the border consists of four rows of pointed scallops three inches deep, of cloth in a variety of colors overcast with yellow crewel; and each scallop embroidered with a disk of wools of shaded colors, three fourths of an inch in diameter, done in outline stitch. The foundation of this mat is stout brown linen drilling, and it is lined with a strip of tapestry carpeting. The effect is unique and very attractive. In the fashion which has existed for several years, of tailor made cloth costumes, the cloth having been produced in many fancy colors, it has been possible to make remarkably pretty rugs of the kind described. The design of that noticed was original with the owner.

MRS. G. T. S. Bay windows are generally very easy to arrange pleasingly, but as say you "wish to break up too much uniformity in the arrangement of your windows, we would suggest that you have the upper half of the central division of your window of stained glass, and draw a curtain on small brass rods across the lower half. In our issue of last month we gave directions as to the method sometimes now employed at home in the application of stained glass, but if you are afraid to attempt it, you have only to take the dimensions of the sash of your window and send to any manufacturer of stained glass for the necessary plate, which almost any glazier can mount. An effective idea is to have a mirror set in the middle part of a triple bay window; and a piece of lattice work from which depends simple lambrequin drapery is a tasteful heading. However, if you have the mirror you cannot use the window-seat as you propose, but must arrange the recess differently. Instead of using dry-goods boxes for making your window-seat, we would advise boxes made especially for the purpose, so that the angles may fit accurately. For covering the front of the seat, woolen reps laid in box-plaits and trimmed with twisted woolen fringe, would be suitable and would look well, and you could cover the cushion with the reps, or with the plush. Or, for both the front drapery and the cover for the cushion you could use woolen momie cloth, or turcoman. We would not advise any embroidery on the cover for the cushion, but that it should be tufted and finished with buttons. The window-seat would look well with the upper sash of the middle-division of your window of the stained glass, and the lower sash curtained with China silk in some pretty color.

H. S. NORTHROP, of 18 Rose street, New York, has just received among other contracts an order for a paneled iron ceiling in the Memorial Town Hall, at Rockville, Conn.; also for the embossed metal ceilings throughout four new schools in Brooklyn. H. S. Northrop's ceilings have already been used in several schools both in Brooklyn and New York with satisfaction.

## DECORATIVE COMPOSITION.

Translated from the French of HENRI MAYEUX, Architect to the French Government, and Professor of Decorative Art in the Municipal Schools of Paris.

### XVII.—COLORED PAPERS, COLORED CALICOES, AND PRINTED FABRICS.



THE early method of making paper-hanging was by "stencilling," in which a piece of pasteboard, with patterns cut out in it, was laid on the paper, when water colors were freely applied with the brush to the back of the pasteboard, so that the colors came through the openings and formed the pattern upon the paper. This process was repeated several times, and was only obtained at great expenditure of labor. It was replaced by calico-printing, which is universally applied to the manufacture of wall-paper.

In printing by hand a large number of blocks is required, as each of the various shades and colors is produced by a separate block, which has to be renewed as soon as the color is exhausted. These blocks consist of engraved pieces, each of which has four pin-points at the corners, as guide-marks for placing the succeeding blocks in the right spot. Within the last thirty years colored paper has been made by machinery, and mills exist in various parts of the country, London being the chief centre. The process is as follows: A ground color is first laid evenly over the paper upon which the colored design is printed by the machine, it being impressed by a series of blocks or rollers placed round a drum, each roller having its own color box, sieve, &c.

A layer of distemper, *i. e.* whitelead or whiting, ground in water, is generally laid on the various coatings of paint; sometimes the surface is glazed, lustred, and sateened, or relieved with gold and wafted by the rotary machine.

The labor and skill bestowed on French decorative papers are stupendous, and the result, alas! is not satisfactory. There is no doubt as to the drawing being good and the coloring sound, but these elaborate compositions with landscapes, gorgeous flowers, scrolls, and every conceivable ornament, even to elaborate figure compositions, are but so much labor lost, inasmuch as it is sought to reproduce in the fragile material of paper, realistic paintings proper to canvas.

A wall-paper should be harmonious in color and unobtrusive in design, so as to give repose to the eye. A paper presenting violent contrasts in color and strongly marked lines, affords the worst possible background for pictures and the general arrangement of the apartment. For besides inequalities in surface, according as light strikes the paper from above or from below, its spotty effect jars with all the other objects in the room, and induces incongruity and bewilderment. Similarly columns, friezes, pilasters, figures, and the like are bad; but foliage and flowers if conventionally treated, are not only permissible but legitimate.

Much care is required in cutting and printing the strips so as that they shall exactly fit the succeeding ones. Another point to be observed is the pattern of the paper, which should not consist of too minute details which are lost at a distance.

Papers made to imitate marble, terra cotta, and the like, are varnished after being hung. If these papers instead of being "marbled," were arranged in simple geometrical patterns, after the manner of our oilcloths, and colored in rich warm single tints, they would at once become decorative and pleasing.

What has been said about paper naturally applies to colored calicoes; with this difference, that the peculiar effect produced by the stamping machine is much enhanced on the pile of woven fabrics. The use of printed materials, both linens, calicoes, and Indian tissues, has become universal; and whether they are made in India, in England, or in France, they are generally distinguished by good patterns produced by a few simple colors.

### XVIII.—TAPESTRY HANGINGS, FURNITURE COVERS, RUGS AND WORSTED.

Tapestry is manufactured on the loom and upon the warp, which consists of wool, thread, cotton, and even silk threads, and the weft is worked with short lengths of as many colors and shades as are required by the workman to copy the picture before him. The loom is formed of two cylinders, round one of which is rolled the warp, and round the other the web. These "uprights," as they are called, are placed vertically in "high warp," and are parallel to the ground in "low warp."

In high warp velvet pile, the worsted threads composing the web, which are to form the surface of the carpet, are linked by a double knot on two threads of the warp, forming on the face a ring, the size of which is according to the height of the pile. When this operation has been achieved the shearing of the carpet takes place, requiring much precision and nicety, as upon it depends the beauty of the carpet.

But whatever the skill of the art-worker—and it is sometimes



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very great—he cannot like the painter judge of the effect of his work nor alter it as he proceeds; neither are the resources of the latter such as glaze and impasto, at his command. He has to deal with a dry material, the dyes of which were obtained by different processes from those of the colors and shades of the copying-picture, consequently they do not always correspond with them. With him transparency and harmonious blending of colors can only be produced by minute touches and elaborate hatchings, *i. e.* by several years of patient and intelligent labor. And if this is true of tapestries for which cartoons were expressly made, wherein the resources as well as the limitations of the loom were considered, it is far more so of many historical, allegorical, and biblical subjects, after the drawings of great painters, with figures, animals, hunting scenes, flowers, fruit, and glades of great finish, fine modelling, and an endless variety of colors and shades: not unfrequently displaying a genuine feeling for nature and reproducing it with great felicity, making one regret all the more that talent of high order and good manipulation should have been so entirely misapplied, Fig. 249.

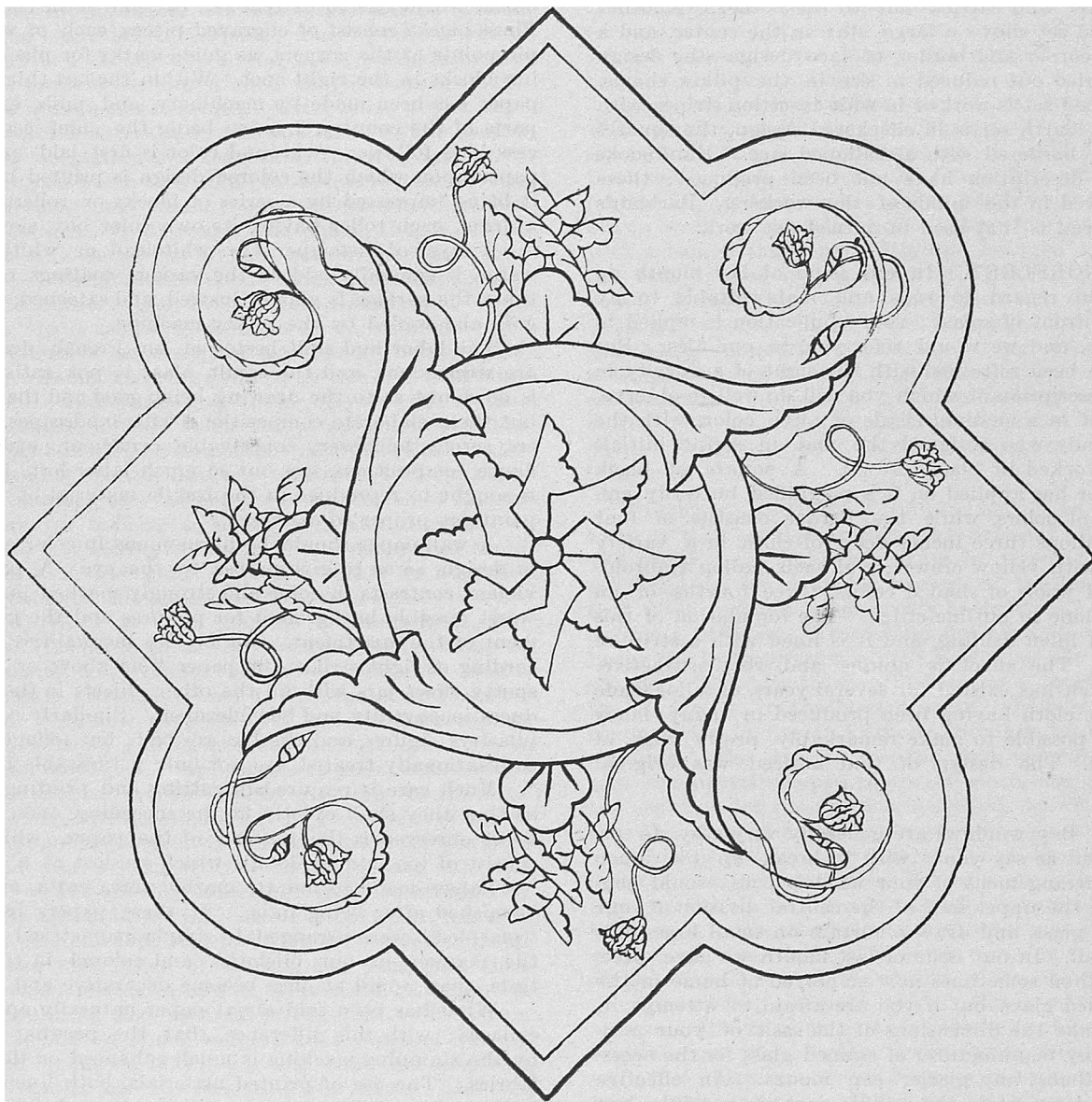
The most beautiful existing tapestries are those which were made at Arras for Leo X. from the famous “cartoons” of Raphael.

We read of Roman emperors giving enormous sums of money for specimens of tapestry. Again, Terence represents ladies executing marvelous productions in the loom amidst their dependents and slaves, beautifully illustrated in one of Rosetti's early pictures.

Tapestry was established in Europe at an early period, when it was also the occupation of high-born ladies, but it is probable that their work was of the kind known as “embroidery,” produced by worsted or silk threads on stuffs, rather than tapestries made in the loom.

That tapestry hangings and furniture covers originated with embroidered or worsted work seems pretty certain. Its best mode of treatment is by simple patterns formed out of geometrical forms, such as the square, the circle, lozenge and the like. Any attempt at reproducing realistic flowers and modelled figures must necessarily be fruitless and end in total discomfiture. Perhaps the most suitable patterns for this kind of work are to be found in Germany, notably those by Sienbenbacher.

Figure tapestry hangings, like other materials, lose their freshness and harmony by exposure, and, as the change in the flesh-tints and draperies is not uniform, they present after some



CENTER PIECE, BY LILLIAN M. LANGDON.

Their number was originally ten, seven of which were found by Reubens in the workshop, where they had been forgotten after the execution of the tapestries. The painter advised the king to buy them, and Charles I. commissioned the manufactory at Mortlake, which had been established by James I. to copy them. These were bought by Cardinal Mazarin at the king's sale after his death, and are now in the “Garde Meuble” at Paris. Those made at Arras for the Sistine Chapel, after many vicissitudes in which they were much damaged, were secured for the Vatican. The cartoons, by a long way the most valuable, belong to the Crown, and have been for some years in the South Kensington Museum.

The use of tapestry is very ancient; the Egyptians produced “painted tapestry” thousands of years before the Christian era; but whether “painted” or “figured” cannot now be ascertained. In Babylon, the palace of the Sassanid kings was adorned with tapestry, woven of gold and silver, recalling Greek fables. Homer speaks of hangings and represents Helen working tapestry (embroidery?) when she is visited by Venus during the siege of Troy.

years a sorry and pitiable appearance. This is not the case with “verdure” pieces, where time instead of detracting seems but to add to their beauty by mellowing and blending the colors, which originally may have been too bright.

For some years past better ideas upon the limits imposed upon the weaver by the material employed are apparent in the productions of the Gobelins and Beauvais manufactures, now both under the same direction. They have ceased to copy the storied compositions, either of “old” or contemporary painters, preferring to obtain from trained ornamentists simple compositions created for the loom, thereby saving much labor and expense, whilst securing a more satisfactory result. The effect they wish to produce does not depend on high finish and multiplicity of shades and colors, but rather on a limited number of intrinsic quality skilfully arranged, with which they form decorative designs, based upon the knowledge acquired by careful training and study of the best models, especially those of oriental origin.

Carpets which are destined to lie under our feet, portions of

which will be hidden by furniture, should not consist of clustering flowers tied with "ribbon knots," nor of ornament of great finish thrown up in relief from a plain ground, as is frequently the case in the productions of the Savonnerie and Aubusson workshops, where the forms are so realistic that they seem to rise and impede our progress. The designs should be simple, the ground well covered, albeit without confusion, the colors neither too many nor too glaring, and the pattern seen equally well in any direction. This principle, never absent from Oriental carpets, is well exemplified in our Fig. 250.

A large proportion of Beauvais furniture covers of the eighteenth century, ornamented with fruit and flowers, vividly colored and of excessive finish, are open to the same objection as the Savonnerie and Aubusson products; in a still greater degree so are the rustic scenes, the classic landscapes, and architecture of the first half of this century. The sound principle which would make us discard tinted panel-work papers is equally applicable to tapestry hangings; where search after perspective and atmospheric effect is equally incongruous. And here we may note that a large proportion of the most remarkable tapestries that have been produced in Europe have their horizons placed low; hence the rule laid down by Mr. Charles Blanc, that horizons should always be very high, is not binding on the artist. That manufactures existed in England prior to the sixteenth century is made manifest by the frequent allusions met with in old records. Of the remarkable specimens still extant may be cited two large pieces, one representing the marriage of Henry VI., and the other that of Henry VII. The production of English tapestry in the present day consists chiefly of printed carpets of every description intended for domestic use, in which ornamentation of a high order is frequently adapted with admirable taste.

Oriental carpets, may be divided into three classes. The Turkish (including Algerian), Persian and Indian. Turkish carpets are very simple; composed of a central pattern, and large masses similar to the center in the four corners, and sometimes at the sides. Red or green are the general ground colors, with blue, yellow, and black interspersed with stars or dots; nevertheless out of such simple elements they never fail to produce rich and harmonious coloring. In Persian carpets the design, always conventional, covers more space; but although floral and animal forms are introduced and a more vivid system of coloring is discernable, all the colors blend together in a marvellous way. Sometimes the ground is red, sometimes deep blue, covered with tulips and pinks in shades of green, pink, yellow and blue. The deep border is formed with a tracery of leaves and various colored flowers, amongst which are birds of gorgeous plumage. The mysterious "tree of life" forms generally the centre of Persian and Indian carpets, as well as of early Italian fabrics due to Persian influence. Indian carpets are too well known to need description; those made at Masulipatam used to be the finest produced in India and almost anywhere. But European influence and European demand, which insist on cheap articles, have effected changes that are much to be deplored.

## XIX.—TEXTILES, CASHMERE SHAWLS, ENGLISH AND FRENCH SHAWLS, EMBROIDERY, AND LACE TRIMMINGS.

Textiles present so great variety of fabrication, that to attempt a description of them all, however slight, is beyond our scope. We will therefore confine ourselves to a few most generally in use, omitting details of execution, as of necessity too brief in this place to be of real service. The word "textile" means every kind of work wrought in the loom; and whether the threads are spun from the produce of the animal, the vegetable, or mineral kingdom, whether of gold, of silver, or any other metal, the webs forming such materials were textiles. Stuffs were at first "plaited," not "woven," as may be inferred from the work of rude tribes at the present day; as well as from the fragments which have been found in the tombs of primitive peoples. "Flax linens" were known to the nations of antiquity. In Egypt mummies wrapped in (fine) linen, dating back thousands of years, have been discovered; whilst plain and figured (striped) cotton and silk textures are of ancient date in countries where the mulberry and cotton plant are indigenous. The first sure indication we have of silk in Europe is to be found in Aristotle. From China and India the manufacture of silk rapidly spread to the West; and in the time of Augustus, silk robes were worn in Rome of so transparent a texture that they "shrouded," but did not conceal the figure, and brought down upon the fair wearers the wrathful strictures of purists. The gossamer-like tissue was due, not so much to a feeling of immodesty, as to the excessive prices that were asked for silk, sold then by weight, as is still the case in the present day both in the East and many parts of Italy.

The enormous cost of silk led the way to "mixed" textures, in which the warp was cotton, hemp, or wool, woven with the more precious web. Besides the various materials, gold and silver cut into narrow "strips" came to be used in weaving, so as to add lustre and richness to the fabric. Some times the cloth was entirely of gold, but its fabulous price induced the weaver to work with the silk strips of paper made to look like gold,

weaving the cloth so closely that the real nature of the material could not be detected even with a magnifying glass.

England, from very early times, had textiles made in primitive looms, varying in design and material. The finer and more tasteful webs were wrought by women, who increased their beauty with stitches done with the needle. The woolen stuffs made at Bath, Worcester, and Norwich, were in high demand both in England and on the continent. The weavers of Worsted, in Norfolk produced a texture of such good quality, that it became known as "worsted," from the place of its manufacture; and the word has passed in the language to describe a distinct kind of work.

The best woolen cloths during the Middle Ages were made in Flanders with English wool; which was esteemed then, as it is now, for its superior quality and the excellence of its dyes.

Goods worked in the loom may be divided into "plain" and "figured," both "flat" and "brocaded," also called "damask" because the forms look as if they had been engraved as on metal. Textiles, whether plain or inwrought with designs, are now produced by machinery. The "power-loom," invented by Dr. Cartwright exactly a hundred years ago, is used for plain weaving, and it is hardly necessary to add, is far more expeditious than the old loom; but when figures, flowers and other devices are desired, the "Jacquard apparatus" is fitted on to the power loom and produces all kinds of fabrics, including carpets and lace curtains.

But wonderful though these appliances may be, and improvements are made every day, they cannot as yet produce the highest class of textiles, such as brocades, fine velvets and the like; for these the old looms worked with the feet acting on the treadles must be resorted to. Nor can our fabrics compare with Indian products either in design, richness of coloring, or manipulation. The most gorgeous Cashmere shawls are made by the natives in looms so small and primitive, that they have to be woven in separate segments. The center piece is first set out, and the other pieces are ranged round it, so as to form the pattern, which may be extended according to the fancy of the worker. The "fine joining" is gone over with embroidery in various subdued and dark shades producing the design; which has more the effect of an elaborate and fine nielling, than work made in the loom and with the needle.

Nor is this all; the slight unevenness of Indian tissues produces a play of light and shadow, which at a short distance lends the appearance of low relief to the fabric. In justice to European as against Indian ornament, it should be stated, that if it cannot approach the latter in brilliancy of coloring and exquisite beauty of detail, its designs, notably of late years, are never confused, and show much skill in their arrangement deserving of the highest praise.

But the same forms or designs should not be impartially applied to silk, cotton, or woolen textures, nor should they be on too large a scale and such as will suffer by draping; whilst the scale in stuffs meant for furniture should be increased and marked by boldness of design, Fig. 252.

Numerous allusions are made in old inventories of "plain" silks and velvets; of velvets "raised" with cord, with spangles or embroidered ("passing") with gold and colored silk threads, which lent the tissue the appearance of having been wrought not by the needle but in the loom. The beauty of these silken textiles was frequently increased by human and animal forms, the flesh tints being worked in pink silk of various shades. Precious stuffs which required years of skilful labor in their manufacture could only be procured by kings and prelates, who wore them on state occasions or church ceremonies in the early part of our era and throughout the Middle Ages. But from the seventeenth century the figures on the sacerdotal vestments, such as dalmatics, orphraies, banners, and the like, were frequently "painted" on the stuff instead of being "worked" with the needle. In the Catholic church these figures were often, and still are, cut out of tinted cardboard and inserted in the vestment. To expatiate on the absurdity and bad taste of similar ornamentation would be sheer loss of time.

The diversity of stitches seen in embroidered work is very great, besides "passing," already mentioned, cross, chain, rose, Russian, whalebone, Maltese, knotted, lace stitch and many more are employed to add variety to the design, Fig. 253.

Cut-work is made in different ways and may be applied to a piece of cloth, silk, velvet or linen. When the application is made on a light fabric, such as muslin, the outline is sometimes traced with whipping-cord, sewn on the stuff; the inner details being worked in with button-hole, chain, satin stitch, and the like, Fig. 254. Embroidery is always worked with the aid of a needle, cant-hook, or "stiletto."

The designer should take into account not only the general disposition of the forms, but also the degree of transparency and opacity he wishes to produce. The juxtaposition of plain and figured bands is to be recommended for blinds and window curtains; the effect of which is reversed as they are viewed from the outer or inner side. This pleasing combination is seen in old bed hangings and window curtains of the fifteenth century



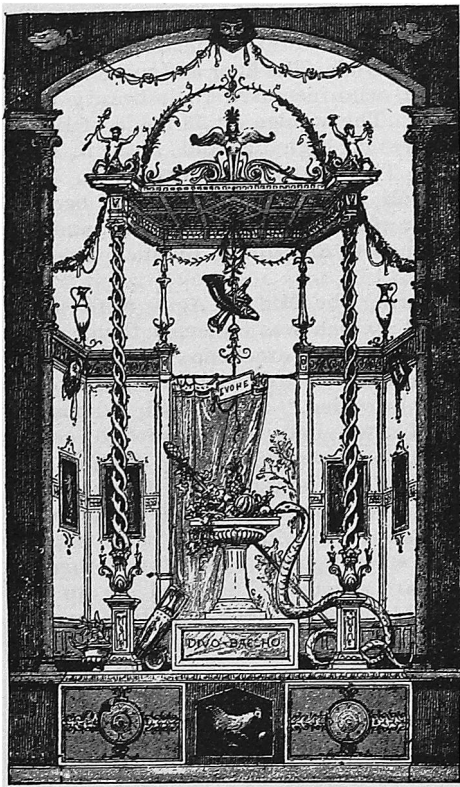


Fig. 262.—Græco-Roman Panelling.



Fig. 259.—Renaissance Ceiling.



Fig. 252.—Textile suitable for Furniture.

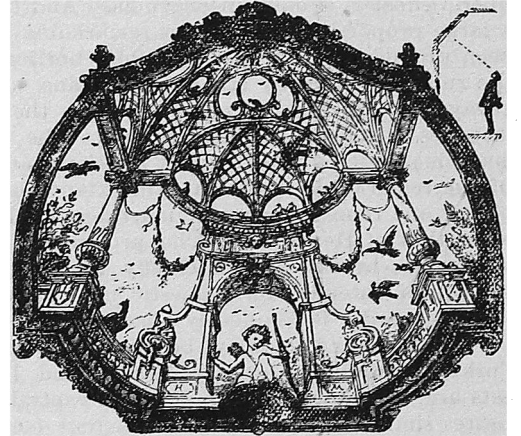


Fig. 260.—French Ceiling.

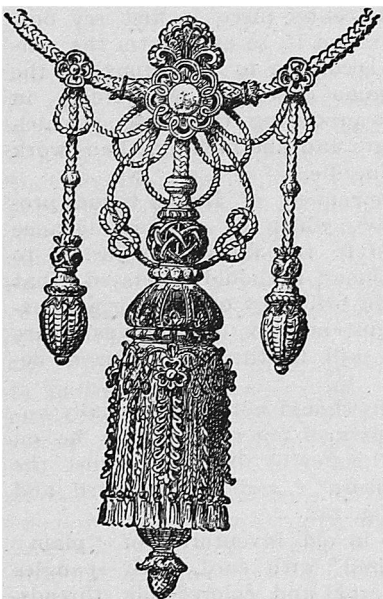


Fig. 258.—Braidery.

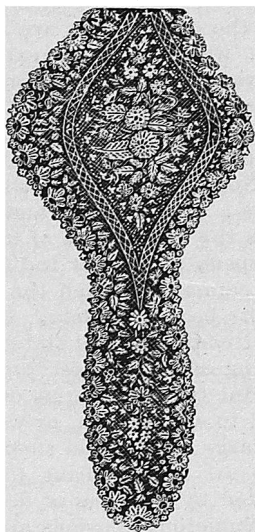


Fig. 256.—Henilton Lace.



Fig. 261.—Mark.



Fig. 266.—Cipher.

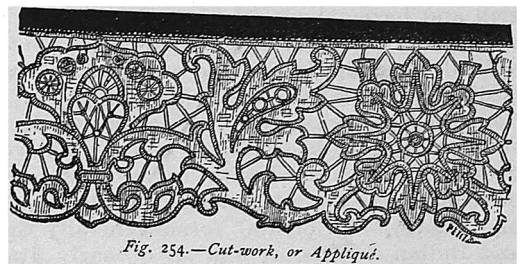


Fig. 254.—Cut-work, or Appliqué.

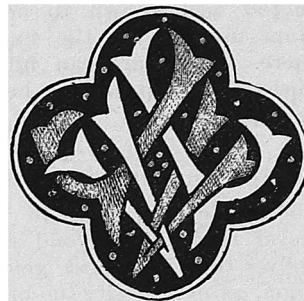


Fig. 265.—Cipher.

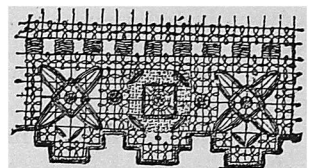
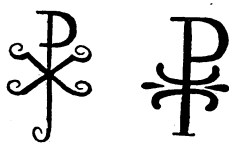


Fig. 255.—Darned Lace.



Figs. 263, 264.—Monograms.

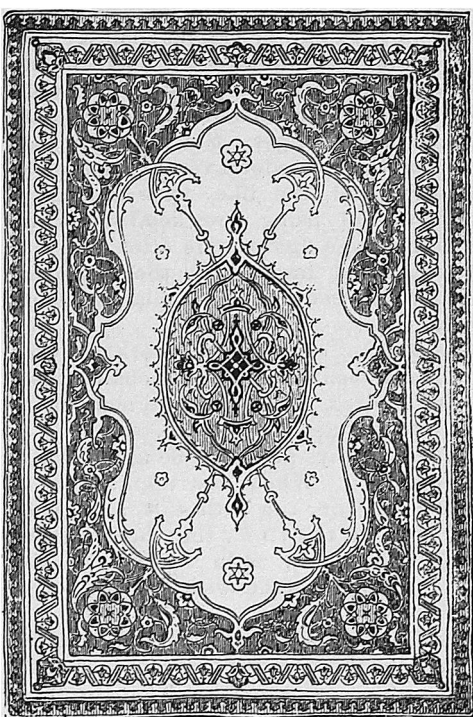


Fig. 250.—Oriental Carpet.



Fig. 249.—Realistic Tapestry.

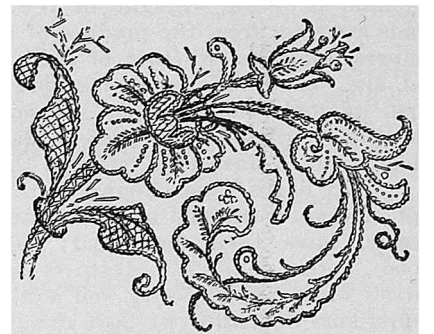


Fig. 253.—Embroidery.



Fig. 257.—Cut-work.

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which generally consist of stripes of velvet or colored satin, alternately with cut-work in crewels. Network upon linen was done on a square ground, and the patterns produced with the needle, or formed of pieces of linen "cut out" and "sewn on," or applied to the net. This kind of work was often executed in colored threads, red, blue and black; or darned with gold and silver, after the manner of Eastern, Russian, and German work of the present day, Fig. 257.

Lace is made of silk, cotton, flax, gold, silver and even the fibre of aloes. It consists of the ground of network and the design of flowers, which are connected by double threads overcast with button-hole stitch, and fringed with loops and knots. The pattern is made separately or with the ground. It is made in one piece in Mechlin, Valenciennes, and Buckingham lace, whilst it is worked into or sewn on to the ground in Brussels and Honiton. In some kinds of lace a little raised cord surrounds the pattern. The open work or fancy stitches are called "fillings."

The most precious lace is entirely worked with the needle and is called "point;" whilst "pillow" is executed by weaving, twisting, and plaiting of the threads upon a pillow or cushion. The best known point laces are those of Italy, especially Venice; Spanish laces and the comparatively modern "point d'Alencon." Needle-lace came into general use in the sixteenth century, when the points and cut-works of Italy and Flanders were worn by ladies and gentlemen as ruffs, cuffs, collars, handkerchiefs, etc. All the lace of this period consists of geometric designs in squares variously combined, Fig. 255.

It is not until the seventeenth century that these forms are replaced by patterns characteristic of the period, such as scrolls and flowing lines. To the Netherlands belongs the invention of pillow lace, which was and still is one of the chief industries of the country.

Brussels lace is of two kinds: needle-point is made in small pieces and united by invisible stitches, called "fine joining." It is stronger than the pillow, but much more expensive, and only made for princes and "millionaires."

Brussels lace is known in France as "English point," respecting which a word of explanation may be given. At the Restoration of the Stuarts, the use of lace became so universal, and the sums of money that were sent out of the country so enormous, that its importation was prohibited by an Act of Parliament. But means were found to smuggle Brussels lace over to England, where it was sold as "English point."

Mechlin lace, which is made on the pillow, has always been in great demand in England, owing to its lightness and pleasing effect.

The great centres of lace-making in this country are Buckinghamshire, the adjoining counties, and Devonshire. The first-named are distinguished for the clearness and beauty of their grounds, but imitation lace has caused the demand for real lace to decline, and the lace-makers, with few exceptions, now only produce Cluny and Maltese. Honiton lace resembles Brussels in make. Great care is bestowed both on the ground and upon its "sprigs," which are worked separately and afterwards sewn on to the ground, Fig. 256.

Art lace is now made in Nottingham by "pusher-machines" which form the pattern, afterwards completed by hand with the "gimp" or thicker thread. By this combined process, shawls, scarfs, flouncings, curtains, and lace of great beauty are produced.

The art of lace making was introduced in Ireland in the middle of the last century, where it has been carried on in various localities with great success ever since. "Irish point," appliqué, Limerick lace, Irish "tatting," "crochet," etc., may be seen in many windows of the metropolis, as well as knitting both plain and ornamental.

"Trimmings" of gold and silver lace once so important a branch of industry, are now almost exclusively confined to military and naval uniforms, whilst the endless variety of silk, woolen and cotton lace, of fringe, tassels, and the like, are scarcely seen except on furniture, Fig. 258.

### XX—DECORATIVE PAINTING, MONOCHROMES, CURTAINS, BLINDS, AND ILLUMINATED AND ORNAMENTAL WRITING.

We have purposely kept decorative painting and its derivatives to the last, because circumstantially to treat of the materials used in their elaboration on the one hand, or those to which they are generally applied, would be out of place in an elementary work of this kind.

It is well known that plaster, wood, metal, textiles, stone, and brick, *i. e.* walls and ceilings, may be covered with painting, and that oils, tempera, fresco, etc., are the means adopted for the purpose. But the principles which govern the production of all ornament, without which no success worthy of the name is to be expected, these are cardinal points too often lost sight of by the artist. The material, destination, and nature of the object to be decorated, should hold the first rank in his estimation. A little reflection will show that the same method cannot with propriety be applied to wood, canvas, metal, paper, or walls; that the architectonic features of a building must be very apparent, since to conceal or disguise them with ornament is to fail

in the purpose for which ornament was created; and finally that when colors are introduced they should be so graduated as to blend and form an artistic whole.

In order to achieve this a thoughtful study of the natural growth of plants, the graceful twining of twigs and branches of trees, the interlacing of grasses, the wealth and harmony of their coloring will suggest ever fresh beauties, and be of the utmost value to the artist. Then, too, he must remember that a work intended for the open air is essentially decorative, so that its general effect should be thought of even before its higher significance. Nor is this all: his training should have prepared him to understand the resources as well as the limitations of his art. This he will best learn by constant reference to the beautiful works of men, who were thorough masters of their art, and whose compositions are distinguished by sobriety of color (sometimes only monochromes) in the larger masses, while the small masses are heightened with primary and secondary tints, according as they formed the equivalent of the dominant color.

In Egypt we find examples of decorative coloring nearly three thousand years old, and as fresh and vivid as if painted yesterday. The excavations at Pompeii, have revealed the fact that the Greeks of that period, if not earlier, used colors to decorate their houses and public buildings, "the walls of which are still glowing with marvelous combinations of colors and the utmost elegance, fancy, and beauty of design," portraying conditions of life that have ever passed away. In them excessive modelling, straining after perspective and atmospheric effects—incongruous on the walls of an apartment—are nowhere visible, and the result is in every way satisfactory. The restrictions imposed by Byzantine artists, at the beginning of our era, upon art production, which continued to be felt throughout the Middle Ages, banished the grace, the freedom, the comprehensiveness and audacity, which had characterised Grecian art; on the other hand this was compensated in part by a quaint simplicity and earnestness of purpose, a strength of sombre coloring that are not without a charm of their own.

This Byzantine influence is still apparent in the productions of the Renaissance, in the early works of Raphael, and even in his famous "frescoes" adorning the corridors and chambers of the Vatican. Of the impropriety of placing figures in such a position we have spoken elsewhere. Raphael was a king among painters, but he was not an ornamentist. The same reservation applies to his contemporaries and successors, both of the Roman, Umbrian, Florentine, and Venetian schools, including Tiepolo, whose architectural compositions on domes and vaulted ceilings sin against common sense, Fig. 259. It is owing to the same misguided judgment that many beautiful compositions due to Flemish and French art lose so much of their interest, Fig. 260, whilst the architectural decorations seen in the vertical panelling of the Græco-Roman period, if less absurd, testify nevertheless to the degradation which had descended on the art of the Lower Empire, Fig. 262.

Of the exquisite beauty of illuminated Eastern MSS., and in almost an equal degree those relating to mediæval times, we spoke in another place. There still remain to notice ornamental writing and inscriptions closely allied to them and the forerunners of illuminated designs, met with more or less, in every period of art, sometimes as a decorative element, but not unfrequently as simple statement of facts. In this class must be placed the "merchants' marks," introduced into mediæval work by those who not being of noble birth, were forbidden to bear arms. But under the hands of artists, simple letters became beautiful as well as decorative. *Vide* 261, a fac-simile of Albert Dürer's initials affixed to his work.

Figs. 263 and 264 are monograms sketched from characters in the British Museum; one drawn up in the reign of Edgar, A.D. 961, and the other in the reign of Canute, A.D. 1031.

A cipher differs from a monogram in that the letters are repeated and reversed, so as to form a bi-symmetrical or multi-symmetrical composition. Fig. 265 is an illustration of this.

The three intersecting C's in Fig. 266 form a good example of a multi-symmetrical cipher: it is taken from a *biberon* of Oiron *faience*, or as it is often termed, Henri Deux ware. A certain amount of doubt exists as to the meaning of the form, but it is generally concluded that it is the initial letter of the queen, Catherine de Medici; an undercurrent of meaning connecting the crescent form with the Duchess de Valentinois, better known as Diana of Poitiers. Fifty-five specimens only of the ware are known to exist, and almost all have this cypher upon them; of these, twenty-five pieces are in English collections, twenty-nine in France, and the remaining one in Russia.

That at first all writings were in capital letters is placed beyond all doubt by the archaic inscriptions found all over the world, including our own country, both on terra-cotta, coins, and buildings. Similar writing was soon found too laborious and cumbrous for the ordinary purposes of daily life, and induced a current writing or "running hand." The resemblance of our letters to the capital characters of which they are a modification can still be traced, but nowhere is this so apparent as in mediæval or Gothic writing, the most picturesque of all for ornamental



schemes, as will be seen in Fig. 266, where arabesques and interlacings are deftly interwoven with the letters.

If our capital characters cannot boast the graceful undulating forms of Arabic, nor yet the picturesqueness of Gothic letters, they have the merit of being easily read, and owing to the straightness and clearness of their lines, are very suitable for cutting hard stone, marble and even granite.

Inscriptions enter largely into Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Arabic, Greek, and Roman ornament in their buildings, pottery, sarcophagi, MSS., and textile fabrics. Indeed, it would be more correct to say that they have been adopted by all nations of the civilized world, nor is it necessary to travel beyond our own country to have the statement abundantly proved.

In conclusion we would remind the student that if he lays to heart, and inwardly digests, the vital principles advocated in this volume, success, real and lasting, will crown his honest endeavors.

## ON "ISLET IN THE CHESTNUT BLOOM."

BY CAROLINE A. MERIGHI.



HOUSE, too far away for its owners to care whether its decorations be imitated or not, offers itself to remembrance so temptingly that I will "e'en" tell of its beauties and wonders for the sake of such persons as may desire to follow a model so artistic and exceptional. Wealth is not wanting in our own country to create as fair a dwelling, and all save the house itself—an old one of which the gray tone is one of its many merits—can be repeated and offered to the appreciation of the friend, the criticism of the connoisseur.

On entering a door which divides the house in the middle, a hall is seen with panels in majolica set above its dark oak wainscoting and reaching to a ceiling but moderately high, this beautiful abode having as one of its advantages, a "cosiness" greatly due to the fact that it is but three stories high and contains no very lofty room or corridor.

Upon the panels referred to and in high-relief are represented the brilliantly plumaged birds of the surrounding country and its animals in wood and field. Each panel is divided from the succeeding one by a garland, also in majolica, showing the fruits and flowers of a favored clime. So true are the colors, so excellent the grouping, that the delighted gazer, little guessing the added beauties awaiting his admiration, is already tempted to give utterance to his enthusiasm, and well he may, for all about him appears to have life. Here a blue bird seems to fly to meet him, there a fawn pauses with lovely and affrighted eyes, and again, a squirrel, nut in paw, sits safely distant on the boughs above, while beneath him drops the acorn, chasing in its fall the glowing autumn leaf.

At the top of each panel branch out widely the huge aur-o-ch's horns and the broad antlers of the stag. Upon an immense sideboard at the left of the hall stand great flagons of glass made in Prague, on which is enamelled the entire process of beer-making and bottling, the workmen shown as busily engaged in transporting hop-vines, barrels and flasks, while in an opposite corner stands a Russian *samovar* with all its *appareil*, ready, summer and winter, to offer its warm and refreshing *chai* to the possibly thirsty visitor.

Arched above a door of exit and opposite to the door of entrance are great boughs of oak in majolica, marvellously imitated from nature, and having a glaze which conveys the idea of the moisture left by a shower. The door of entrance is similarly overarched with boughs of holly heavy with glittering hoar-frost and white with shining snow.

Above, the exquisitely painted ceiling represents with perfect truthfulness the nests of swallows as built in the eaves of old houses and across the entire stretch of this delicately tinted *plafond* these home-recalling birds fly in countless numbers and are so faithfully depicted that the illusion is complete, and looking up, the visitor involuntarily pauses to see some one of their number alight close beside him.

And now the fair hostess—in this "House of Dreams" both host and hostess are physically suited to their artistic surroundings—opens a door and the visitor enters upon—what shall I say?—enchantment? For here he is, as it were, "embowered in bliss." Above his head and completely covering a trellis-work of bamboo which runs along the walls and sustains them are passion flower vines so marvellously executed in metal with flowers of porcelain that no one has yet been able, until a close examination has been made, to discover that they are not very nature's own production. These arching vines meet upon the ceiling over head, and the rich purple, scarlet and blue clusters hang down temptingly, the blossoms mingling with the myriad tendrils as if instinct with life.

What adds to the naturalness of this most original decoration is the fact the vines appear to grow from what seem to be

beds of earth running in "garden boxes" along the sides of the walls. Forward of these are lounges of satin with soft cushions, set temptingly about a carpet imitating grass and moss. Small tables with vases of glowing flowers are repeated in long mirrors in which the reflection of the passion flower vines gives, although the room is not large, the effect of size and a prolonged reach of fantastic foliage.

On the opposite side of the hall and opening into the dining-room, which overlooks a lawn and a portion of the garden, is a second room, a reception-room. A small but surpassingly good piano—an "upright" stands out from the pale blue wall, its top entirely covered in all seasons with the most superb flowers. The ceiling represents the glow of morning as at sunrise, and the beauties of the dining room are visible from this room, owing to the fact that a *glace sans tain*, or mirror without a quicksilver back, fills in the entire intermediate space above a shelf, which, like the top of the piano, is always completely covered with natural flowers in jars of magnificent pottery, after Bernard Palissy and Léonard de Limoges. Over the *glace sans tain* a superb curtain of embroidered plush and satin can at any time be drawn to conceal the inner room, its always partly displayed folds serving as an additional decoration.

Let us now enter the dining-room, a very favorite resort of the *intimes* of this charming dwelling, both because of the breakfasts, dinners, lunches and suppers so dainty and delicious as to be quite indescribable except by a *gourmet* and—above all—because of the exceptional beauty of its decoration, fascinating alike to *cognoscenti* and unlettered men. Here is a wainscoting of dark oak upon one side with panels in wood work. A marvellous group of wild ducks, pheasants and woodcocks in natural colors and in high relief first greets the eye on the left of the door and beneath a disk of porcelain, four feet wide, upon which are painted field flowers, poppies, daisies and buttercups. Beneath this panel and a second having hares and wild rabbits as its subject stands a high sideboard upon which are pieces of the inimitable silverware of modern times by such wonder-workers as Duponchel and Rudolphi. An example of their work will I cite in a salver upheld by a circle of laughing nymphs chasing one another and bearing arched and vine laden boughs with which they endeavor to entrap and throw one another upon the ground. Many-colored flagons, chafing-dishes, glassware and old Saxe adorn the buffet. Along the wall stand straight backed chairs, while the table, capable of extension and contraction, is of oval form and of solid and floridly carved old mahogany. But it is the sight of the opposite wall of this exceptional dining-room that entrances the beholder, giving as it does a wonderful procession of bacchanalians after the most classic models and in life-size, and offering to the gazer's eye groups which it would take many pages to fitly describe in their living grace and vivid loveliness.

Passing up a staircase at the extreme end of the lower hall, the boudoir of the hostess is now displayed. The walls of this exquisite apartment are *capitonnées* or padded, like those of the boudoirs of Parisian *grandes dames*, and entirely in pale blue satin. Each wall has a painted panel in china of which the work is of miniature-like delicacy. Upon one is a group of sleeping maidens over whose heads hang branches laden with roses worthy of the Gulistan or "Rose-garden" of Persia. Upon another are saucy Cupids wrestling laughingly together. A third shows *Ino* holding a cluster of grapes above the mirthful lips of the "Infant Bacchus." A fourth displays a Spanish Gipsy girl dancing to the accompaniment of castinets. On the floor is spread a carpet imitating the skin of a leopard, which extends only far enough to meet a border painted upon the floor with thoroughly illusive effect and representing the growths of an Eastern jungle. Upon the mantel which reaches to the ceiling and consists of a succession of small shelves surrounding an oval mirror are *figurines* in various fine wares, ivory *chinoiserie*s and groups of *terracotta* intermingled with Japanese vases in delicate blues and vivid yellows. Repeated in the mirror is a clock on a base of malachite and bearing a statuette of *Psyche*, after *Barbedienne*, on each side of which are silver cupids driving triumphantly tiny silver cars harnessed with butterflies of the same metal, their wings dazzling with many colored stones. The toilette-table standing between the windows, has an immense oval mirror surrounded by a wreath of convolvulus and its leaves in colored glass, perfectly imitating the natural vines and their varied blossoms. The ornaments of the table are all in "jewel-ware" which is to say that its cups and flasks are embossed on a smooth surface with glass in various tints surrounded by a rim like a jewel on a ring, this ornamentation running round the entire body of the flask or cup. Intermingled with these more modern ornaments are Venetian *tazze*, Florentine mosaics of old date and small figures in Parian marble, upholding tiny hand-mirrors, bracelets and finger rings. A curtain of pale blue plush with a wrought border of daisies is draped across the bath-room door, through which may be seen a deep bath-tub of metal set in rose-wood and walls lined with mirrors, the floor being laid with tiger skins.

An adjoining sleeping room is oddly furnished with ebony